

Springsteen's sideman leads rock concert

Written by Administrator



Musician Clarence “Big Man” Clemons, left, with Bruce “The Boss” Springsteen in one of their legendary shows. Both are members of the E Street Band.

BOCA RATON, Florida — The Bicol Clinic Foundation, Inc., a non-profit humanitarian and medical relief organization based in this city, is hosting a free rock concert on Feb. 19 to be headlined by acclaimed Bruce Springsteen’s saxophone player Clarence “Big Man” Clemons and his Temple of Soul Band at the Mizner Park Amphitheater on Plaza Real in Boca Raton.

“Rock’n the Hard Place,” presented by Seaside Music and Technical Productions, is being organized by the Bicol Clinic Foundation as a way to give back to the community of South Florida, according to Dr. Mitchell Schuster, a Philippine-educated American physician who established the foundation with his family some five years ago.

Dr. Schuster studied medicine at the Far Eastern University in Manila in the 80s and met his

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"beautiful wife," Tess Lacsca-Schuster, the daughter of a fisherman, during his internship in a rural fishing village in Bulabog, Bicol.

They now have four children, who are also directly involved in the foundation.

"This is our way of giving thanks to the people of South Florida for providing so much to Bicol," Schuster said.

"It is also a way to raise awareness and funds for the clinic's latest initiatives."

The foundation recently thanked one of its major donors, Fil-Am political leader and businesswoman Loida Nicolas Lewis, for her generous donation of \$10,000 to the cause.

"With your help at the platinum level, this concert will happen and we will be able to reach thousands of people and create a real awareness for the needs of the Bicol Clinic Foundation," wrote community outreach coordinator Laura Ratcliff in a letter to Lewis, CEO and chairman of TLC Beatrice International Holdings, Inc.

"We are hoping to create a solid sense of partnership with the people of South Florida and throughout the nation so that Dr. Schuster's dream of building a permanent clinic in the Bicol Region can be achieved within the next five years."

Dr. Schuster's son, Josh, who is CEO of the foundation, said charity work doesn't have to be dull, that's why the concert was organized.

"It's a great opportunity for South Florida residents to participate and learn some great methods of giving back to the world," Josh Schuster said, adding that donations may also be made directly to the foundation at Bicolclinic.org

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Clemons and the Temple of Soul will be joined on stage by the internationally celebrated band Ambrosia, which will be playing its Billboard hits, among them "Biggest Part of Me," "You're The Only Woman" and "How Much I Feel."

An all-star band with world-renowned concert pianist and keyboardist Arthur P. Strout, and a very special line-up of surprise top-charted Billboard artists will also take center stage.

Don't Speak, a jazz-fusion trio of musicians, will open the show, bringing to the crowd a unique and exciting blend of jazz, rock and Latin percussion.

Clemons, who is Springsteen's sideman and saxophone player for over four decades in the E Street Band, immediately said yes when approached by Ray Durso of the Seaside Studios to topbill the benefit concert.

Durso said the Bicol Clinic Foundation has a soft spot in Clemons' heart, with the musician fully aware of the foundation's mission to bring first world medical practices to third world countries.

The foundation has been travelling to numerous regions throughout the world bringing medical relief to villages and rural areas that have no access to medical care.

The foundation is partnered with several medical schools across the nation to help train medical students and residents in this type of care, bringing groups of doctors, nurses and other volunteers to areas that needed urgent medical care.

Aside from the Philippines, it has performed missions in other third world countries such as Sri Lanka, Somalia, Nepal and Niger, as well as in Haiti following the devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake.

The foundation currently has a disaster response team that has traveled to Haiti three times since the fatal quake in January last year.

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Using a specially outfitted van to travel from region to region, volunteer doctors and nurses dispensed medication and provide care to those who need it.

The team is now raising fund so it can return to Haiti to help quell the cholera outbreak that has already killed over a thousand and gravely sickened tens of thousands more.

Permanent clinic in Bicol

One of the goals of the foundation, and which is also close to Dr. Schuster's heart, is the construction of a fully operational medical clinic in the Bicol region.

"The poor in the Philippines have no options for health care," declared Dr. Schuster.

"The nation's health care is run on a cash system, and the rate of death from diseases that we consider easily treatable is astronomically high, especially from tuberculosis."

Although admission to the concert is free, people can make donations, buy T-shirts and other souvenirs and merchandise, while enjoying a great evening of music, food and drink.

A portion of the concession proceeds will also benefit the foundation.

Visit **www.Bicolclinic.org** for more information.

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The Schuster family, including Marisa, daughter of the author, and friends, including the Schuster family, posing for a photo at a restaurant.